

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Response in reply to the Final Office Action dated April 6, 2009, and in furtherance of the telephone interview conducted on June 23, 2009 and a follow up telephone interview with the Examiner on July 1, 2009. Claims 1, 3, 4, 12, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27 to 32 and 35 have been amended. No new matter was added by these amendments. Applicants have submitted a Request for Continued Examination with this Response. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for the Request for Continued Examination and any other fees due.

During the July 1, 2009 telephone conversation, the Examiner indicated Claim 1, for example, is unclear. Specifically, the Examiner indicated that it is unclear whether in step (c), one or multiple sets of reels are activated. Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 18 to clarify the pre-existing claim language. Applicants do not believe the other independent claims raise the discussed clarity issue.

Also, during the July 1, 2009 telephone conversation, the Examiner indicated that Claim 18 may be rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 in a future Office Action. Applicants have amended Claim 18 herein, rendering any possible rejection moot. However, Applicants make no admission as to the merits of such a possible rejection.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, 18 to 23, 28 to 30, 33 to 39, 41 and 42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over United States Patent No. 6,832,957 Falconer ("Falconer") in view of UK Patent Application No. GB 2083936 to Hurst et al. ("Hurst"). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection.

Applicants have provided the following explanation of Figs. 6A and 6B of the present application (provided below for convenience) for illustrative purposes. In this example, a gaming device includes fifty-eight different paylines. Fifty-eight separate reel set displays 300, 304 are simultaneously displayed to a player, where each reel set display includes a different one of the fifty-eight paylines.

Conventional slot machines display all paylines on a single set of reels. As a result, some players may have difficulty determining whether they have obtained winning symbol combinations on one or more of the different paylines. The present invention simplifies and makes determining the winning symbol combinations on each of

the paylines easier for a player by separately and simultaneously displaying each of the paylines on a separate display of the set of reels.

In the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 6A and 6B, the first payline is displayed at relatively larger reel set display 300. The other reel set displays, including the other paylines, are displayed at relatively smaller displays 304 and positioned adjacent to or above the main reel set display 300.

Referring to Figs. 6A and 6B, the player has wagered on the maximum number of paylines, fifty-eight, in the game. The player activates the set of reels in the game. The set of reels stop and display a plurality of symbols on the different paylines. In this example, paylines two, five, six, seven, eight, eleven, twenty-one, twenty-two, thirty, thirty-one, thirty-four, thirty-five, forty-eight, fifty-five, fifty-six and fifty-seven indicate winning symbol combinations providing awards indicated by the award displays 306 associated with the different reel set displays 304. The gaming device adds the awards and provides the player a total award of two hundred eighty-five credits as indicated by the paid display 316.

FIG. 6A

16,18

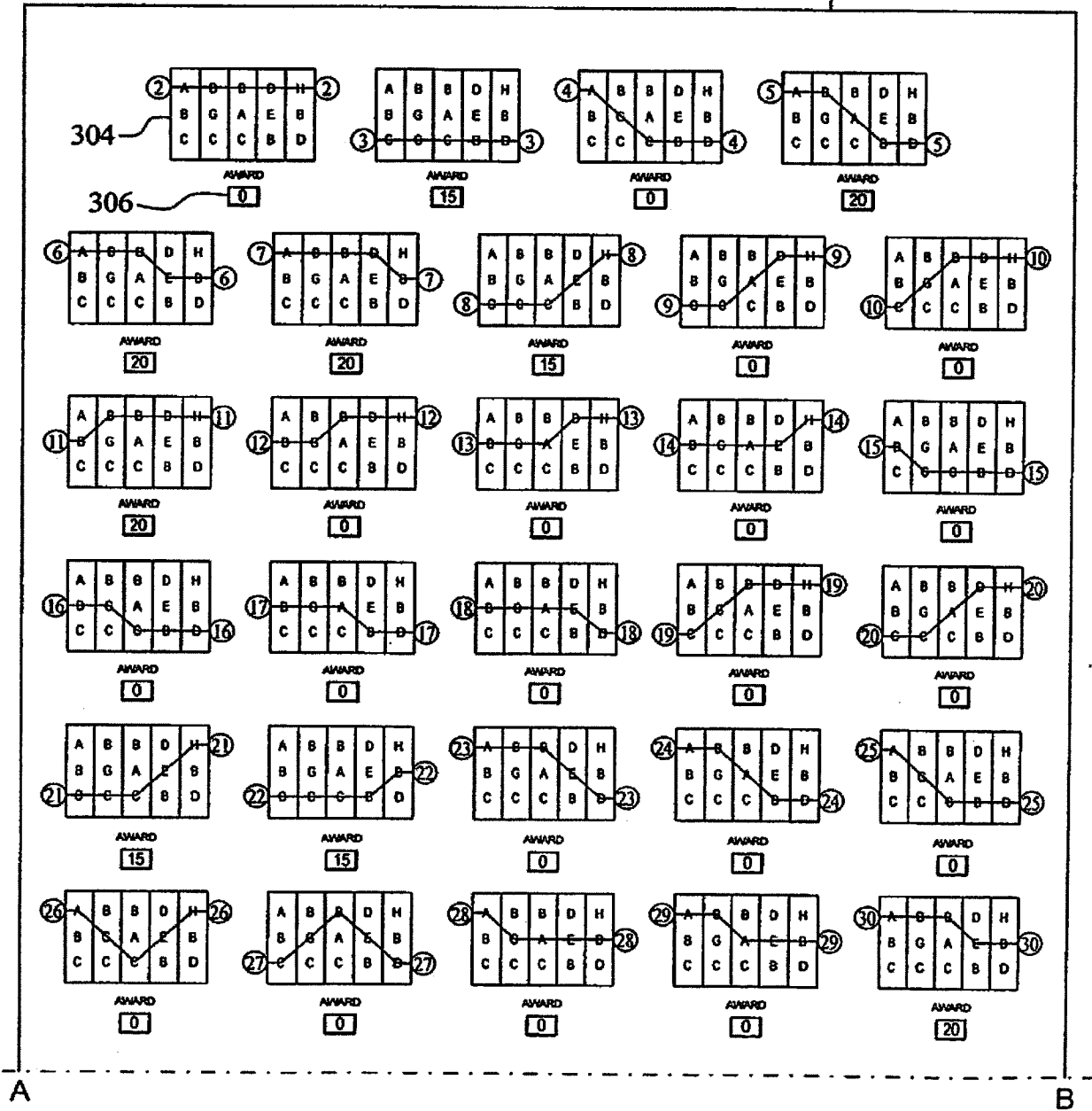


Figure 1 illustrates a slot machine game interface. The top section shows a 5x3 grid of reels with symbols A, B, C, D, E, H. A winning combination of A-B-B-D-H is highlighted across the top row. Below this, a series of 20 numbered examples (304-323) show various reel configurations and winning combinations, each with an 'AWARD' value. At the bottom, a summary section shows the 'TOTAL BET DISPLAY' as 174, and a 'PAID DISPLAY' of 285. Below the paid display, a row of five boxes shows the 'NUMBER OF PAYLINE DISPLAY' (58), 'BET PER PAYLINE DISPLAY' (3), 'TOTAL BET DISPLAY' (174), 'PAID DISPLAY' (285), and 'CREDIT DISPLAY' (511).

Claim 1, for example, includes at least one processor programmed to operate with at least one display device for each play of a game to: separately and simultaneously display both of: a reel display of a set of reels, the reel display associated with one of a plurality of paylines [reel set display 300 in Fig. 6B above], and a plurality of additional reel displays, wherein each of the additional reel displays includes a copy of the set of reels and is associated with a different one of the plurality of paylines [reel set displays 304 in Fig. 6A above]; activate the set of reels of the reel display to generate and display a plurality of symbols based on a random determination; display the same plurality of the symbols generated on the set of reels based on the same random determination on each of the additional reel displays, wherein each additional reel display identifies a combination of symbols occurring on a different one of said plurality of paylines; and provide an award to a player based on any winning combinations of symbols occurring on said paylines.

Falconer discloses a gaming device including multiple sets of reels. A player places wagers on one or more paylines associated with each of the sets of reels. Each set of reels independently randomly generates an outcome including a plurality of symbols. The gaming device determines if the player is entitled to any awards by checking the symbols associated with each of the paylines wagered on by the player. If the player is entitled to an award, the gaming device provides the player with such an award.

Thus, in Falconer, each set of reels generates its own respective outcome. In one embodiment, a player is provided with an award if a designated symbol occurs once on one set of reels, twice on a second set of reels and three times on a third set of reels. (See column 7, lines 36 to 60). If the additional sets of reels were copies of the first set of reels, all of the sets of reels would generate the same outcome, and this embodiment would not make sense. In another embodiment of Falconer, the gaming device provides a bonus award if the same combination of symbols appears on a payline in two or more sets of reels. (See column 8, lines 6 to 9). Similarly, this embodiment would not make sense if each of the additional sets of reels were copies of the first set of reels.

Hurst discloses a slot-type gaming device. In one embodiment, at random “after a game” (page 2, line 2) a reproduction of the reels may be displayed on a screen. As discussed during the June 23, 2009 interview, in Hurst, the reproduction of the reels occurs randomly after a play of the game as part of a bonus skill game. Page 2, lines 2 to 9 of Hurst explain this bonus skill game in more detail, stating:

Such a feature may consist of a reproduction of the reel display in the window, the player may then press the start button to cause a simulated slow spin of the reel display upon the screen. He then has a fixed time period in which to stop the reels by pressing further buttons, in an attempt to achieve a winning symbol combination on the win line.

Claims 8 to 10 of Hurst further corroborate that the cited reproduction of the reels, or simulation of the reels, in Hurst is actually part of a separate bonus skill game. Claim 8 of Hurst, for example, is directed to “[a]n amusement machine as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the controlling circuitry is operative to provide a game of skill displayed upon the screen.” [Emphasis added]. Claim 10, cited in the Office Action, is directed to “[a]n amusement machine as claimed in claims 8 or 9, wherein a simulation of the reel mechanism is displayed upon the screen.”

Applicants’ representative and the Examiner appeared to agree on this interpretation of Hurst after some discussion. As discussed during the interview, because the “reproduction of the reel display” in Hurst is part of a bonus skill game in which the player attempts to stop the reels, the symbols displayed when the player stops the reels in Hurst are not based on a random determination.

The Examiner and Applicants’ representative agreed that neither Falconer nor Hurst disclose at least one processor programmed to operate with at least one display device for each play of a game to: display the same plurality of the symbols generated on the set of reels based on the same random determination on each of the additional reel displays, wherein each additional reel display identifies a combination of symbols occurring on a different one of said plurality of paylines.

In Falconer each set of reels generates a plurality of symbols based on a different random determination. Using the same random determination to generate a plurality of symbols in Falconer would not make sense because the plurality of symbols

generated on each set of reels would always be the same, enabling players to simply bet on the same payline of each set of reels and receive duplicative awards.

No matter how Hurst is interpreted, Hurst does not disclose multiple “simulations” of its reel mechanism; rather, Hurst only discloses one simulation of the reel mechanism which is part of a bonus skill game, not based on “a same random determination.” Further, as discussed during the interview, all Hurst adds to Falconer if the references are combined is a bonus skill game played after the Falconer game. Accordingly, the combination of Falconer and Hurst also does not disclose the above-discussed feature. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, 18 to 23, 28 to 30, 33 to 39, 41 and 42 are patentable over the combination of Falconer and Hurst and are in condition for formal allowance.

The Office Action rejected Claims 3 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Falconer in view of Hurst and United States Application No. 2004/0137978 to Cole et al. (“Cole”). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection. For the same reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 3 and 4 are patentable over the combination of Falconer, Hurst and Cole and are in condition for formal allowance.

The Office Action rejected Claims 7 to 11 and 24 to 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Falconer in view of Hurst and United States Patent No. 6,336,863 to Baerlocher et al. (“Baerlocher”). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection. For the same reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent Claims 7 to 11 and 24 to 27 are patentable over the combination of Falconer, Hurst and Baerlocher and stand in condition for formal allowance.

The Office Action rejected Claims 16, 31 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Falconer in view of Hurst and United States Patent Publication No. 2002/0082075 to Meyer (“Meyer”). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection. For the same reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent Claims 16, 31 and 40 are patentable over the combination of Falconer, Hurst and Meyer and stand in condition for formal allowance.

The Office Action rejected Claims 17 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Falconer in view of Hurst and United States Patent Publication No.

2003/0017868 to Crawford ("Crawford"). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection. For the same reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent Claims 17 and 32 are patentable over the combination of Falconer, Hurst and Crawford and stand in condition for formal allowance.

Applicants have made an earnest endeavor to place this application in condition for formal allowance and in the absence of more pertinent art, such action is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,
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BY  _____

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Date: July 6, 2009